

Checklist for Paper Writing

Is the title informative? If I am responding to one of several writing prompts, is it obvious which one I am addressing?

Does the opening paragraph set up the subject of the paper and show why it is interesting, puzzling, and important?

Does each paragraph begin with a clear connection to the one before and treat one clearly defined subject?

Does the conclusion both draw together my main thoughts and present some new and interesting idea about their significance?

Does every sentence flow naturally and logically from the one before and lead logically to the next?

Does the paper have adequate signposts making clear the direction of my thought as I progress from one question or argument to another?

Is the meaning of every sentence crystal clear?

Does every word convey the precise meaning I want to express?

Does every word pull its weight, or can I be more concise?

Have I any jargon or fuzzy abstractions where more fresh, vivid, concrete terms are possible?

Have I used any passive constructions that I can change to the active voice?

Have I kept one verb tense wherever possible?

Is the referent of every pronoun clearly identified, and does it match the pronoun in number?

Have I avoided split infinitives?

Am I absolutely sure the documentation and any quotations in the paper are handled correctly?

Have I read the paper aloud to make sure the meaning is clear and that commas mark all the natural pauses in speech?